

The Prairie Light Review

Volume 42 | Number 1

Article 85

Fall 12-1-2019

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Recommended Citation

Fabrizio, Erin (2019) "Thursday (On A Tuesday)," *The Prairie Light Review*. Vol. 42 : No. 1 , Article 85.
Available at: <https://dc.cod.edu/plr/vol42/iss1/85>

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THURSDAY (ON A TUESDAY)

ERIN FABRIZIO

It was Tuesday, and it seemed like the weekend was an unreachable, unattainable goal; just a flicker of light at the end of an infinitely long tunnel. Tuesdays were always the worst day of the week for me. Most people hated Mondays but for me, Tuesday was when the real dread set in. My father is prone to depression and perhaps some of that had been genetically passed on to me, ignited once a week, because there was just something about Tuesdays that had me longing for a Monday.

But that week, there was something electric in the air. Not only had I just plucked my first gray hair and managed to only slightly freak out about it, but my favorite band, Thursday, had recently come out with a new album and their song, "We Will Overcome" was thoroughly stuck in my head. Ruining a recent breakup, waffling about whether I should go to grad school, and hating my job were standard daily activities, and the lyrics of "We Will Overcome" were powerful to me even though I didn't particularly know what they were about. What was Thursday overcoming? From listening to their previous two albums, I gathered that the singer, Geoff Rickley, was trying to overcome the fear, sadness, and anger associated with losing someone in a car accident. I felt for him and could really hear the pain in his voice - always there, always the same anguished and raspy voice encouraging that "we will overcome."

Me? I was overcoming the residue of yet another bad dream last night. I was overcoming the discouragement that resulted from defaulting my college major to something I could take alongside my friends. I was overcoming the disappointment of breaking off a 5-year relationship when I knew it just wasn't going to work. I was overcoming my hesitancy to stand out, by embracing my weirdness and dying my hair purple or pink depending on my mood. And on this particular day, I was overcoming my desire to tell my boss to shove it. Thursday and I were constantly overcoming the trials of life. Mine just happened to be less horrific.

The weather had changed that week of early June, 2006, and had begun to be consistently a beautiful, 75 degrees. The trees were bright green and at this time of year, the sun was just high enough so that at noon I could sit in front of the building and not be in its shadow. Our office was so dark that every day at lunch, I felt like I was crawling out of a bomb shelter that I'd entered in 1968. Armed with my iPod, I think it may have felt natural to hiss at the bright yellow sun if I didn't long for its light all day. As I squeezed onto a crowded elevator, Geoff Rickley chanted in my ear, "Follow the path that's straight and narrow, hand in hand. Our roads are paved with broken arrows. We will overcome!"

As often as work allowed, I ate lunch outside on the river. My job felt like a personalized form of hell, but the architecture of 35 E. Wacker was beautiful, and I took solace in the fact that my building had been used in the filming of *Batman Begins*. Christian Bale had stood on one of the gothic columns at the top of the building and looked watchfully over the city (placed there with computer graphics imagery, but still. Batman.) My Tuesday lunch

breaks were so different from the dark, mysterious world that Batman lived in. I imagined him up there looking down on the Chicagoans hurrying around, protecting us from excessive cab fares, and long lines at Subway. Like Batman, I liked watching people go about their day, and on the days when I sat there by the river, it felt peaceful.

On that particular Tuesday, however, I was not going to be eating lunch on the river. My friend and former co-worker, Vince, had invited me to go to lunch with him and we were meeting at a restaurant that was between our two offices on Wacker Drive. Usually I was more excited to leave work than I was to see Vince, but that day was different. Something electric was in the air.

As I walked down Wacker Drive, I could see his gangly strides approaching me about two city blocks down. There is no mistaking his gangly strides. His arms flail everywhere and his toes point inward. His lack of a butt means his pants are consistently too long and bunch up around the ankle. His height and broad shoulders offset his slim frame but leave his torso swimming in XL shirts with no hope of rescue. His hair, on the other hand, is perfect; long, brown and shiny in the sun and it blows around in the wind like it has a life of its own. I'm fairly certain that he grew his hair long upon my recommendation a year ago when we worked together. Prior to having luscious locks, he slicked his short hair back like a 1930's hitman which complimented neither his quirky, heart-on-his-sleeve personality nor his humongous Italian nose. I'd mentioned to him one day while at the fax machine that I thought his hair would look good long, and ungreaed. He scoffed at the idea of having hair like anyone other than Michael Corleone, but slowly I began to notice the change.

I admired my handiwork as it neared me, and adjusted the mini Geoff Rickley in my ear. I pretended not to see him so that when he saw me, he would notice how gracefully I walked (starting now) and how I had a distant longing look in my eye (that I initiated on command upon seeing him in the distance). It was fun to flirt with Vince. He was easily flustered, which was very entertaining. He was going to see how lost in thought I was, and the mystery of my thoughts subject would keep him thinking about me for days. This had become my normal routine, provided I didn't trip on a crack in the sidewalk and ruin it (completely related side note: I frequently did trip on cracks).

But then something happened that I did not intend. There is a part of "We Will Overcome" that crescendos in an arm hair-raising chorus that I loved cranking up as loud as Steve Jobs allowed. Encouraged by my success at avoiding sidewalk cracks, I continued making flirtatious eye contact with smiley Vince. Just a few steps before we reached each other, my favorite, overly-recited words pounded in my eardrums. "We will overcome. We will overcome. Will overcome. We will wait for this. We waited too long. To see the Promised Land." I hit the PAUSE button.

Wait - what!?

This was completely unplanned. I'd felt like Thursday and I were in this thing together - overcoming stuff and whatnot - but now I was in

it alone; the lyrics seemed to have changed their meaning for me mid-stroll. My intention was to wistfully look up at him through a fuzzy lens like Ingrid Bergman in *Casablanca* but instead, I looked into Vince's eyes – really looked – and time stopped. There was a whooshing and a tunnel of light and a lot of color. I could see all kinds of things in there; love and caring, wisdom, an old way of doing things, curiosity about me, and timelessness that I had never known. It was as though I was both traveling through time, and standing still overlooking all of time – at the same time. I could see the brilliance and depth and complexity of Vince's life and the glow of his wit and humor in it all. Above all, there was an innocent, yet ancient longing for reciprocation.

I felt like I was seeing him for the first time. My future husband. I suddenly knew that I wanted to know everything about him.

And it freaked me out.

But I couldn't tear myself away from looking into his beautiful eyes. And to my surprise, his eyes weren't brown – they were hazel, and I saw this now for the first time. They reminded me of mint chocolate chip ice cream. Little brown flecks floating on a sea of emerald green. And his super silky hair, which was floating in and out of the way of my unyielding gaze, arranged around his face like stage curtains. I had the urge to microwave some popcorn and watch this show for the next several hours.

Instead, I forfeited my creepy, one-sided staring contest and took off my iPod. I thought about the song lyrics again, "We waited too long to see the Promised Land." I'd been waiting a long time to have a decent job with a cool boss who didn't frown on individualism, but that wasn't what Geoff Rickley was singing about anymore. Honestly, I didn't even know who was singing anymore— me or Geoff. For the love of god, had I just sung the lyrics out loud!?

I put the headphones in my bag, cringing at the thought that I may have just given away everything I was thinking. Vince gave me his characteristically lanky one-armed hug, "hello." I considered the fact that he was most likely oblivious to my new found meaning in this song that he'd probably never even heard.

He flipped his hair back and asked, "You weren't waiting long, were you?"

The only word I was able to get out was, "Yes!"

Batman 2000

(at right)

Mike Stone

Digital Art